



Wistful odes to the dawning of a new season, page 1B

Cottage Grove Sentinel

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SOUTH LANE COUNTY'S MOST AWARD-WINNING NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1889

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Council gives Main Street plan its first 'yes' vote

Two majority votes of approval are required for passage

BY MATT HOLLANDER
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Nearly every seat in City Hall was filled on Monday night for the City Council's much-anticipated vote on the Main Street Refinement Plan. The Council passed the ordinance unanimously, 5-0. However, in order to adopt the plan, a second vote of passage will be needed at the Council's next regular meeting on April 13.

The Council had previously motioned to vote on the ordinance during its March 3 meeting. However, when several councilors expressed their concerns about voting on the plan as written, the motion was withdrawn in lieu of scheduling a worksession.

Between the March 16 work session and Monday night's meeting, city administrators worked to address the Council's concerns. Changes to the plan included using stamped and/or colored concrete instead of brick along the Main Street sidewalk; opting for traditional water fountains over "bubblers," changing the name of 'All-America Square' to

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Marijuana dispensary burgled, suspects captured

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Cottage Grove medical marijuana dispensary Apothecaria experienced its first break-in last week. Police fear it won't be the last, but the dispensary's owner sought to share a message with those who would attempt the feat in the future.

"We don't keep the marijuana out where you can get to it," Colleen Valley said. "These guys weren't able to take much of anything — some pipes and other supplies, because everything's locked up."

A burglar alarm at the dispensary on Row River Road was reportedly tripped just after 4:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 17. Cottage Grove Police responded in about six minutes, Valley said, and a canine sweep of the area was negative for any suspects.

Detective David Burgin said the Apothecaria break-in was the final act in a crime spree of sorts by three local individuals, who allegedly began their Tuesday morning with a "beer run" at Safeway followed by the alleged theft of about \$600 worth of property from the Cottage Grove Walmart at about 1:30 a.m. Surveillance footage eventually led to the arrests of 20-year old Marcus West and 19-year old Justin Hurst and a 17-year old minor. West and Hurst were cited into the Lane County Jail on theft and burglary charges, while the minor was cited into the Youth Services division and released to the custody of his mother. Much of the property taken from Apothecaria, which included flower screens, metal grinders and glass pipes, was recovered a short time later.

Valley said that the valuables at Apothecaria are kept in two 800-pound safes.

"There's nothing to steal; this is not the place to rob," she said. "As soon as the store is closed, everything is locked and there are panic alarms and video cameras. We've spent thousands on this equipment, and it's already paying off."

Burgin said he was impressed with the security measures taken at Apothecaria, though he's not sure it will thwart all would-be thieves.

"We think the dispensaries will be a perennial target for break-ins," he said, "though we hope that's not the case."



photo by Greg Lee

Cottage Grove's Sarah Pope serves up cream of mushroom soup with the help of daughters Bailey and Natalie at the Souper Fundraiser on Tuesday, March 17.

Souper still draws a crowd in ninth year

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

An organizer called the latest installment of Cottage Grove Community Sharing's popular Souper Fundraiser one of the best in the event's nine-year history.

Mary McNamara said the Souper, which features a plethora of nearly a dozen soups prepared by local chefs

for the price of admission, appears to have raised about \$9000 for Community Sharing.

"By all accounts it was a large success," McNamara said. "I can't believe it's been nine years now, and every year it keeps getting better."

Guests at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church's fellowship hall on Tuesday, March 17 chose from soups such as Gail Hoelzle's

classic minestrone, the Italian sausage soup of Beth Pool, pozole from Sara Meyer and Samantha Duncan and corned beef and cabbage in honor of St. Patrick's Day prepared by Debbie Lavios and grandchildren of Old Mill Feed Store. McNamara said sponsorships secured 16 reserved tables before the Souper even began and added to the impressive fundraising total.

City's new legal counsel features familiar faces

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The City of Cottage Grove has new legal representation, though it's possible to recognize familiar faces among its new counsel.

The Cottage Grove City Council announced at its Monday, March 9 meeting that contracts for legal services had been offered to Attorney John Woodworth, who will serve as prosecutor at Cottage Grove Municipal Court; representatives of the Local Government Law Group will serve as the City's general counsel. Previously, the jobs of both general counsel and city prosecutor had been filled by local attorney Sean Kelly.



John Woodworth will serve as Cottage Grove's prosecutor; Woodworth has already served the City on an interim basis.

The job of local prosecutor is certainly not unfamiliar to Woodworth, who has acted as a fill-in at the position for years, most recently on an interim basis during the absences of former City Attorney Kelly, who was suspended from his position in January of 2014 after he was charged with assault in response to an incident that occurred at the home of a Cottage Grove woman on New Year's Day. City Manager Richard Meyers later reinstated Kelly on a "last-chance" basis, though the attorney was arrested in Springfield last October on a charge of operating his motorcycle under the influence. Kelly was dismissed again following that arrest.

Meyers reported to the City Council recently that seven highly qualified candidates responded to the city's request for proposal, and the evaluation committee was very pleased with its selections. Woodworth was the only candidate to respond to the request for city prosecutor services only.

Woodworth talked with the Sentinel following court proceedings Thursday, and he said that, while he's practiced all manner of law

in his 19-year career, serving as a defense attorney has perhaps gone furthest to inform his approach as a prosecutor.

"You want to know what the other side is going to argue," he said. "If you can't do that, you're not going to do well in very many cases. It's my belief that prosecution and defense work under the same constitution and the same laws. There's no need to be a 'true believer' either way; you're seeking a just result among a lot of competing factors."

Woodworth said he attempts to allow first offenders in the municipal court system an opportunity to exit the process without a criminal conviction; habitual offenders, though, are subject to another approach.

"I tend to offer some kind of diversion device that we will later review for compliance by the defendant," he said. "I'm generous on that front but I'm not very generous on the back end of things. Guys that obviously aren't 'getting it' will be sent downstairs."

During recent court proceedings, Woodworth said he's taken an especially strong stance regarding those who fail to appear in court.

"I've gone with a policy to charge everyone who fails to appear," he said. "The criminal element in Cottage Grove seems to be a pretty tight-knit group, and I think the word is getting out. As a result, the rate of those who fail to appear has plummeted."

Cottage Grove's jail is certainly an effective deterrent for certain criminals, Woodworth said.

"People ask to be sent to Lane County because it's more comfortable than our jail," he said. "Our jail has a deterrent value that exceeds that of Lane County."

Woodworth also had praise for Judge Martin Fisher, whom he's known since law school, and the Cottage Grove Police Department.

"Cottage Grove is lucky to have this group of officers," he said. "If I don't do my job, all the hard work of these guys goes to waste, and I'm not going to let that happen."

The Local Government Law Group, a member of Speer Hoyt, LLC, employs a team of five attorneys to handle legal matters for

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Also inside:



On track

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OAHS

Cottage Grove's passport to aviation history, page 6A

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